



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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TO: Healthcare Providers
Maxine Hayes, MD, MPH
FROM: Maxine Hayes, MD, MPH
State Health Officer
SUBJECT: Administration of Rota Teq Vaccine

As you know, the Department of Health (DOH) received funding to distribute a new vaccine, Rota Teq, for the prevention of rotavirus gastroenteritis. The vaccine is administered in three doses beginning at age six weeks to two months. Unlike all the other vaccines the department distributes, the rotavirus vaccine is administered orally. We understand that this fact has raised questions and concerns about who may or may not administer the vaccine. This communication is to provide clarification on the administration of rotavirus vaccine.

After consulting with Laurie Jenkins, Assistant Secretary for DOH's Health Systems Quality Assurance Division, it is clear that many of the health care providers licensed in Washington are authorized to prescribe and administer oral medications, including the rotavirus vaccine: physicians, physician assistants, osteopathic physicians, osteopathic physician assistants, and advanced registered nurse practitioners. Those health care providers may also delegate administration of the vaccine to other health care practitioners with a scope of practice that specifically includes the administration of oral medication. Under Washington law, the administration of oral vaccinations can be delegated to registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing technologists (nursing students, if oral administration has been covered in the education and training.)

The department frequently responds to questions about the tasks that may be performed by licensed health care assistants and other unlicensed staff in medical offices. Licensed health care assistant and unlicensed staff have strict limitations on the activities they may perform. They are not allowed by law to administer oral medications, including oral vaccines. We are aware that this longstanding restriction may complicate the administration of vaccines in your facility or office, and would be happy to discuss options and alternatives to help assure children are vaccinated on time.

Additional information about health care providers with the authority to prescribe and administer medications is available at https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/hpqa1/hps4/Pharmacy/documents/Prescribing_Authority_2006.pdf or by contacting Karen Jensen at DOH at 360.236.4621 or Karen.Jensen@doh.wa.gov.

The Department of Health welcomes further discussion of this issue.

